



Masters Thesis Submission

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Songs and Storytelling – A Therapeutic Theatre-Making Process

as a Tool to Heal the Wounds of the Past

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Abstract

The main intention of this paper is to share my experiences and discoveries explored through a theatre-making qualitative research process. In this manner, I created and directed my own autobiographical play as a means of revisiting and working through specific traumatic events in my past. The aim is to share how this helped heal the wounds of the past.

In this paper, I have included my personal encounters, my observations and my reflections how Therapeutic Theatre and theatre-making methodologies were used in creating, in rehearsing and in the performance of the play to facilitate the healing of my traumatic past.

The play, entitled *Home Is Where Pap En Vleis Is*, deals with a specific event believed to be the source of the trauma I have been dealing with. I used the play as a vehicle to journey into a dark forest to face my demons. As in Psychodrama, or in Robert Landy's Role Method, the actor who played me took an auxiliary role while I, as the director, took the role of the helper. Together, we journeyed into the dark forest of my psyche to meet the ghosts needing to be laid to rest.

Apart from seeking healing, as a training Drama Therapist, I also wanted to learn about the transformative potential of Therapeutic Theatre. As in the mythological Gilgamesh's quest (Booker 2004:72) or as in the hero's journey (Campbell 1968: 227), I wanted to come back with the boon. I needed to collect the "valuable prize", by contributing to the development of Therapeutic Theatre in the South African context. Sharing the play with the audience was also a way of journeying with the larger community.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Laying the Ghosts of the Past

This research aims to “unearth the truth about our [South Africa’s] dark past, to lay the ghosts of that past so that they will not return to haunt us and that we will thereby contribute to the healing of a traumatised and wounded people, for all of us in South Africa are wounded people.” (Homann, 2009 cited in Sinding and Barnes, 2015: 81). These words by Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu, chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, capture the essence of what this research is about.

Since I have started my training to become a Drama Therapist, I have been involved in Drama Therapy and Psychodrama processes shedding light into the wounds I was carrying. From these processes, I came to understand there were “ghosts of the past” which had been haunting me. These ghosts manifested themselves in a form of a recurring dream that had kept my pillow soaking wet with sweat almost every night. Like a time-traveler I needed to go back to the events that were the source of this dream, as Archbishop Tutu says, to unearth the truth about my dark past so to lay the ghosts of that past.

My quest became like that of the mythic hero whose quest was to journey into a dark remote forest to kill a monstrous figure who has kept the kingdom under the shadow of great evil. (Booker 2004). I took a journey through a Therapeutic Theatre process involving development of an autobiographical script and the theatre-making process. At first, I worked with one actor and then later added two other actors as I journeyed to the remote forest to face the ghosts of my past so they would stop haunting me.

For years, I had been haunted by a dream in which I am taken to a place of slaughter by the red headband hostel forces who raided the townships just before the 1994 elections. These forces were part of the Apartheid's Third Force, and they were described in the TRC as follows:

While little evidence exists of a centrally directed, coherent or formally constituted “Third Force”, a network of security and ex-security force operatives, frequently acting in conjunction with right-wing elements and/or sectors of the IFP, was involved in actions that could be construed as fomenting violence and which resulted in gross human rights violations, including random and target killings. (Truth and Reconciliation Committee, 2003)

This place of slaughter in my dream was a forte for this Third Force. It also happens to be the township in which I grew up. My family was forced to leave the township due to violence threatening our lives. I was told told by my therapist these events which had given rise to the dream shouldn’t be revisited during our therapy sessions because I could be re-traumatised. Therefore, I decided to use the principles of Drama Therapy to devise and explore a therapeutic theatre-making and story-telling technique that would provide a safe space to tell the story with the hope of enabling healing.

Exploration of this technique in my MA Performance as Research (PAR) proved effective in providing a safe space to deal with the effects of my traumatic experience (Mkhoma 2015). I hypothesised if the impact of the song connected with the events of this dream was so strong, using songs as a gateway to the past could be effective. As a bit of background, the memory of the song was so powerful, that even minutes after waking up I could still hear it in my head.

Moreover, I wanted to make the events of the dream tangible. Casson (2004:199) says, “we usually cannot control dreams. Psychodrama offers the opportunity to re-dream while awake and therefore be in control: to change the dream.” Previously, in my PAR I used singing the struggle songs as a pretext to a free-writing process aimed at producing an autobiographical script to be performed in front of an audience. In this current research, I borrowed from the

Psychodrama technique of letting someone else play me as a character. Hence, I used the edited version of the same script not as a performer, but as a director.

The main intention of this paper is to share my experiences and discoveries explored through an art-making qualitative research process. With this technique, I created and directed my own autobiographical play as a means of revisiting and working through specific traumatic events in my past.

The aim is to share how this helped heal the wounds of the past. In this paper I have included my personal encounters, my observations and my reflections. I feel they provide authenticity and more background information on the efficacy of Therapeutic Theatre and theatre-making methodologies. I also believe the process facilitated the healing of my traumatic past.

The play, entitled *Home Is Where Pap En Vleis Is*, deals with a specific event believed to be the source of the trauma I was dealing with. I used the play as a vehicle to journey into a dark forest to face my demons. As in Psychodrama – or in Robert Landy’s Role Method – the actor who played me took an auxiliary role. I took on the role of the helper and together we journeyed into the dark forest of my psyche to meet the ghosts needing to be laid to rest. Apart from seeking healing, as a training Drama Therapist, I also wanted to learn about the transformative potential of Therapeutic Theatre. As in the mythological hero’s journey (Campbell 1968: 227), I wanted to come back with the advantage of contributing to the development of Therapeutic Theatre in the South African context. Sharing the play with an audience was also a way to journey with the larger community.

2. MY THERAPEUTIC JOURNEY

2.1. The Call to Adventure

Campbell (1968:53) describes the call to adventure as a call of destiny that summons the hero by transferring his spiritual centre of gravity from within his society to an unknown zone. Campbell writes:

This fateful region of both treasure and danger may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delights. (Campbell, 2008:48)

This idea of the call to adventure being connected with the hero's spiritual centre of gravity is in line with how my journey began. It started with a very personal internal frame of reference. Moustakas (1990:27) says the primary task of the researcher “is to discover an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications”.

In one of my sessions with my therapist, we focused on how I seemed to have lost my drive. She made me focus on what I do on the mornings of the days when I do feel energised; the days when I am motivated to look forward to the day. I then realised the days I felt the drive always began with a song.

She asked me to think of a specific song I usually sing. I realised it was not a single song but a pattern in the songs. They were songs of South African liberation struggle, songs depicting heroic acts of resistance or songs paying tribute to icons of the struggle. The resonance I had with these songs gravitated me towards the journey I was about to take.

Taking a closer look at the songs revealed quite a number of them, including those composed in exile, told stories I could identify with. This characteristic of struggle songs is explained by

Jolaosho, (2014) “The music of South Africa’s struggle emerged from communal practices in which music accompanied everyday activities, from rising in the morning to work routines to settling in at night”. My repertoire of songs I sang in the morning, though they came from a range of songs carrying the sense of resistance or war, they also reflected people’s daily lives, daily struggles, and some were about lamenting.

Of all the songs of lament, I explored in my morning singing sessions, one stood out and it permeated the play I would later create. The song is about someone who is dearly missed by his loved ones. “*Ekhaya Bakulindile*” loosely translated it means at home they are waiting for you or they miss you is the title of the song. From the song’s lyrics and its musical theme, I found the overall signature for my play, which is about being exiled and estranged from loved ones. The song sounded the call for me to journey back home and thus, my call to adventure began.

The more I explored the meaning of the song and its connection to my journey, the more the fog which encompassed my narrative of the past began to lift. Buruma (1995) who is known for his extensive work in the study of post war trauma believes stripping the past of its mystery and relating history as a series of coherent events is crucial for healing collective trauma. Hence, the main aim of this exploration was to use the songs of the struggle as an aid to create coherent narratives of my past so I could gain mastery of my personal story.

The image of journeying into a dark forest was suitable for this research as my autobiographical play, *Home Is Where Pap en Vleis Is*, follows my journey home. During the time of the struggle, my home was situated in the stronghold of the deadly hostel warlords who had forced many young people into exile. This journey was prompted by a

song, *Ekhaya Bakulindile (At Home They Are Waiting for You)*, which kept on playing in my head since I had begun working with songs in my creative space.

In my research, I altered this narrative into a theatre piece performed by one principal actor who played the hero/protagonist and two other actors who played the archetypal characters representing both the songs of the struggle and the songs of the enemy. The two secondary actors also served as various auxiliaries who interacted with the protagonist.

Via this play and through my being the director of the piece, I wanted to take on the archetypal role of the mentor and help the hero (myself) to face the demons of the past. Having experienced the process through my previous research where I took the role of the protagonist, I had come to realise how it was almost impossible to carry myself as the protagonist in front of an audience. Eventually, I decided to switch roles and be the guide.

As the guide, I managed to usher myself as the hero played by the main actor, who ventures into the dark forest to face my demons. Through a rehearsal process filled with moments of fear, defeat, and tears as well as moments of triumphs I managed to transform and heal the trauma that haunted me for many years.

Through exploration of the possible power of Theatre-making as an arts-based research Methodology, I wanted to know if this method could facilitate transformation and healing within me. Would the process of “theatre of self” and placing my story before an audience actually work? I wanted to fully acknowledge whether or not this could be the method I would employ in my future practice as a Drama Therapist.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT / RATIONALE

Being involved in Drama Therapy processes during my training had not only shed a light on the trauma I was carrying, it also fortified me with courage to face my past. One state of mind seeming to be a result of this trauma was my inability to regulate myself as far as confrontation and violence is concerned.

Eva Leveton and Armand Volkas (Leveton 2010: 131) in their Psychodrama process worked at healing the wounds of history among the families of Holocaust survivors. These survivors suffered from unexpressed grief, isolation, alienation and inadequacy – all the common symptoms of collective trauma.

In me, this seemed to be manifest through avoiding confrontation at all costs even when it was necessary. In addition, whenever I tackled matters head on, I would go to extremes driven by anger seeming to come from nowhere. I eventually realised my need to take on the role of the hero and journey back to the dark forest. I had to face my fears and find expression for my suppressed grief and anger.

Quite a number of studies about the effects of the wounds of the past have revealed there is a need for South Africans to tell their stories, the need to pick up the pieces from where the TRC had ended. du Pisani and Kim (2004:86) say, “Questions about history will remain relevant and will continue to provoke debate. It is, therefore, up to historians to continue the endeavour started by the TRC and resist forgetting.”

Though this research focuses on a therapeutic journey of one person, it is also aimed at exploring a model contributing to the search to find healing for the ills of the unfinished business of TRC – for both individuals and groups.

Moreover, there seems to be very few spaces where people can come together to share their stories with a wider audience, with the hope of gaining insight into their lives. The aim of this exploration is to combine the Principles of Drama Therapy and Theatre-making into a model able to facilitate healing the wounds of the past current trauma faced by many South Africans.

This research is based on the notion that if songs and stories continue to play such a huge role in the lives of people in their personal, religious, cultural and political spheres, then songs and stories can also play a significant role in facilitating healing. The power of songs is backed by a radio broadcast in which the songs of the struggle were discussed.

A journalist named Gail Smith is quoted by Hirsch (2002) saying: “the freedom songs evoked a kind of pride [...] and there would be a bond, an immediate acknowledgment of commonality in what we were about”. Hence, these songs were used in this process not only as a pretext, but also as part of the entire narrative presented before an audience. The audience identified with the songs and this immediately invited them into the world of the story.

An autobiographical exploration may seem self-centered and self-indulgent. I was confronted with questions about the relevance of my process. However, Heddon (2002:5) states: Performers who play themselves usually go beyond the self.

He continues, “They are also strategic, and often politically so, using them ‘selves’ as vehicles through which to project particular social perspectives, inflected by positions of race, class, gender and/or sexuality.”

In the first performance of *Home Is Where Pap en Vleis Is*, one of the notes I received from the audience was the landscape of the play was too narrow. To this person, it seemed the play was confined within my private world and hardly projected the social perspective to

make the audience take ownership of the narrative. This perspective of going beyond the ‘self’ guided me in shaping the play to go beyond my private affairs to become a world any member of the audience could identify with.

This was achieved by letting the actors find their own truth in the play. It also allowed their input according to how they viewed the matters at hand. Being open about how the actors interpreted the play brought about a rather objective aspect. This was complete turn-around to my subjective stance stemming from handling the narrative as “my” story rather than a South African or even a universal story.

Although I assert the story has become a South African/universal parable and have used the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as my reference, the research is not meant to replace it or to claim to be a national forum for healing. Wilson (2001:14) says: “The TRC constructed a collectivist view of the nation as sick body, which could be ritually cured in the TRC hearings... Individual psychological processes cannot be reduced to national process.”

It therefore stands there is one piece of TRC unfinished business to be addressed by this research. This is the need to provide individual psychological process of healing for all participants.

“As we celebrate 20 years of South Africa’s democracy, freedom songs matter as much [now] as they ever did... Not only do freedom songs constitute legacies from the past, they [also] indicate present dynamics and offer directives toward the future” (Jolaosho 2014: 2).

These three realms: legacies from the past; present-day dynamics; and offered directives for the future are what this research has been about. I had to revisit the past so I could understand and deal with what was happening to me in the present. Otherwise, I could not move forward to a future where I would no longer be haunted by the ghosts of my past.

4. RESEARCH QUESTION

My research question came as a result of noticing that while I am on a journey to become a healer, acknowledging my own wounds is not only necessary but crucial if I am to be an effective healer. The central question of this research is rooted in the principles of heuristic¹ inquiry.

Djuraskovic and Arthur (2010:1572) assert: “Heuristic inquiry attempts to discover the nature and meaning of phenomenon through internal pathways of self, using the processes of self-reflection.”

Basically, my research question is based on exploration using Therapeutic Theatre as a form of Heuristic inquiry. This brings us to the following research question:

In what ways can Therapeutic Theatre be used as both a tool for enquiry and for healing the wounds of the past?

Seeing how wide-ranging Therapeutic Theatre is, this question seems to be too broad.

Consequently, I have broken the question into more specific sub questions:

- If I take the role of director in a play exploring a traumatic event which was way beyond my power to control, will I be empowered to face my demons?
- If I embody the role of mentor for the actor who plays me, will I also develop an inner mentor who will help me cope with my demons?
- Will taking such a journey bring healing?

¹ Heuristic: involving or serving as an aid to learning, discovery, or problem-solving by experimental and especially trial -and-error methods. (Hacker 2011)

5. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this research is rooted in the form of healing pioneered by Moreno (1946). Instead of focusing on confronting pathology through talking and thinking Moreno developed a process in which the client could spontaneously explore various ways of being.

Drama Therapy and Moreno's method of Psychodrama are rooted in the belief that drama provides a frame through which human nature can be understood, and form a basis for the theoretical underpinnings of this research. One tenant of Psychodrama is that the protagonist – the person whose story is explored – can step outside their drama to watch.

According to Casson (2004) being the observer provides distance and strengthens the observer ego. This Psychodrama angle – the opportunity to observe and to speak to the self from the outside – is what I have borrowed. I have chosen the route of not playing myself as an actor but of being outside the drama as the director. Theoretical implications of Psychodrama techniques and methods in relation to being outside of one's self and speaking to that 'self' through someone playing you, is central to this research.

Phil Jones (2007:3) describes these fundamental theoretical underpinnings of drama as therapy to be twofold: "The first is that drama and theatre are ways of actively participating in the world and are not merely an imitation of it. The second is that within drama there is a powerful potential for healing."

From these two tenants lies the foundation of what Drama Therapy is and why it is a suitable frame for this research. In Drama Therapy, participating in the dramatic processes does not serve as an antecedent to therapy. The process of participating in drama itself facilitates change. Drama becomes the vehicle through which participants reflect on their lives.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE THERAPEUTIC THEATRE METHOD

Whenever I heard the term “Therapeutic Theatre” I had always thought of a specific theatre form such as Forum Theatre or Image Theatre. When I began my journey to train as a Drama Therapist I began to understand theatre is itself therapeutic. Evreinov, cited by Jones (2007:6), believes drama is “infinitely wider than the stage” and not just for entertainment or instruction. It is “something as essentially necessary to man as air, food and sexual intercourse.”

Therefore a clear distinction should be made between when the therapeutic nature of theatre is referred to within the context of being necessary to life, and when it is intentionally used for healing. Another distinction needing to be made is the phrase “therapeutic theatre”. Currently, it is often used as an umbrella term for a specific form of process-based healing.

Casson (2004: 57) says: “Internationally, drama therapists are practising therapeutic theatre; Playback Theatre, Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, Psychodrama; [they] are all therapeutic theatres.” Then what is Therapeutic Theatre since it is used as a method of enquiry and also the form studied in this research?

This question calls for a specific definition highlighting what Drama Therapy entails, rather than what it is. Jones writes:

“The local definitions [of Drama Therapy] create a much more tailored sense of what drama-therapy aims to be and to offer... A one-size-fits-all definition would ill serve clients with very different needs and capabilities.” (Jones, 2007:8)

The core of this research is the reflective nature of drama which allows the person taking part in the drama to connect their inner world; their life experience; or a problematic situation within the world of the created drama. Jones (2007:8) says through this connection, the client forges a new relationship with the problem or experience they are facing. Jones (2007:8)

explains why such connection is necessary: “The aim is to find in this new relationship resolution, relief, a new understanding or changed ways of functioning.”

7. LITERATURE REVIEW

7.1. Introduction

The literature explored in this report seeks to shed light on the third phase of exploration that began with my desire to use songs, storytelling and the theatre-making process to travel into a particular time of my life to redress a traumatic experience which had haunted me for years. The literature explored here focuses more on the final stage which is the main focus of this paper. However, I have also explored literature and spheres related to each of the three preceding stages.

The first phase of the research was my Master’s Drama Research. There, I used songs of the South African struggle against Apartheid as a mnemonic through which I revisited a traumatic event in my past. The process included a free writing process giving birth to an autobiographical play script that I performed before an audience.

This paper focuses on the subsequent process in which I worked with an actor who played my character and two other actors who played the archetypal characters representing the songs. What I wanted to explore was the possible power of using an autobiographical story and songs of the struggle in a theatre-making process to confront the demons of the past which had followed me to the present so I could find healing.

7.2. Why we tell Stories?

In his book *Seven Basic Plots – Why We Tell Stories* (2004) Christopher Booker says central to all forms of storytelling, the oldest plot is one in which the hero must confront a seemingly powerful and life-threatening monster. It is from this tenet my research is based. I have opted to use a theatre-making process to confront a monster that presents itself in a form of a recurring dream.

Since I do not have control over my dreams I had to rely on what Herb Propper explores in his paper, *A Concise Introduction to Psychodrama, Sociodrama and Sociometry*. “Psychodrama works with the contents of our imagination, providing an opportunity to see, feel and even touch some of our inner images by bringing them into concrete, physical reality.”

Writing about and dramatising the events connected to what occurs in the dream made the dream tangible and manageable. This also gave me an opportunity to play an all-powerful mentor, the director; who guides the hero, the actor who plays my character, in a quest to overcome the monster – the recurring dream whose contents are played by the other two actors.

According to Booker (2004), the monster usually has in its clutches a prize, a treasure or someone valuable needing to be rescued. This is a fitting metaphor since my quest was not only about overcoming the monster. I also wanted to gain the prize, the mastery of my life and to heal from the traumatic experience that was the genesis of this dream haunting me.

The idea of healing through exploring an autobiographical story is supported by Trotter (2009), who speaks of how commemorative memory in a form of story serves as a utility for psychological recovery for victims of trauma. “For victims of traumatic loss, narrative development offers a road to psychological recovery and the prospect for healing.”

7.3. My role as the Director versus my role as the Storyteller

(storyteller not to be confused with the actor)

My conflict as the director of my own personal story was I had to remain objective as a director while I was also being emotionally attached to the story. In her book, *The Post-Traumatic Theatre of Grotowski and Kantor* (2012:49), Magda Romanska speaks of how Grotowski tackled a play or a text considered too sacred to be tempered with.

According to Romanska, Grotowski always wanted to attain a unique directorial relationship with the script he was directing. “To choose a play,” says Grotowski, “doesn’t necessarily mean that one needs to agree with its author”. Grotowski strongly believed the playwright’s vision had to be replaced by the director’s vision.

This idea of the director’s vision versus the writer’s vision is relevant to the process as one of the primary aims of this research was for me to find a different perspective of the issues explored in the play. My mission as a director was to “construct a brand new work of art, [my] spectacle” (Romanska 2012:49).

7.4. The Cultural Self as an Archetypal Character

How was I to keep with Grotowski’s idea of not necessarily agreeing with the author when I was the author of the play? Dealing with this paradox called for exploring the idea of two separate selves. In the book, *Autobiographical Memory and the Construction of a Narrative Self* (Fivush and Hade, 2003:3), Katherine Nelson speaks about various levels of self.

Nelson asserts the construction of one’s autobiographical story involves the history and stories of the culture within which the person has grown up. It is from this context the cultural self emerges. Through this lens of the cultural self a character who can be any other young man who lived through my time emerged.

It is through this lens I made my actors to perceive the characters in the script, as archetypal and defined by culture. Instead of relying on me to define the characters for them, my actors had total freedom to interpret each character through the cultural context presented to them. Their interpretation, which was not limited to the exact events in my memory, broadened my understanding of the context.

Meldrum (1990:80) sums up this concept of contextualised self as “the self and symbolic interactionism.” Meldrum asserts the objects we see around our environment carry a symbolic meaning and have social significance. Interactionism, according to her, means humans can communicate with each other through symbols because these social symbols have shared meaning. In this context, even the “self” is seen through the frame of the symbolic social object. She says, “We experience ourselves in the same way as we experience other objects and people” (Meldrum, 1990 81).

Through this frame I was able to look at the “myself” in the story as an object of study and analysis. This greatly contributed to forming a more objective view of both the story and character. To further deepen the symbolic nature of self, Meldrum uses Robert Landy’s Role Method. She says, “Thus, role is the mediator between the self and the other, and the self and the social world” (Meldrum, 1990 85). Having taken the role of director, I was able to play the mediator; a guide not only of the actors I was working with, but also of the character of self I was exploring.

7.5. The Actors and Cultural Context

Viewing the character in the script as a cultural self, meant the actors had to borrow from their own cultural experiences. The book, *Systems of Rehearsal* by Shomit Mitter (1992) tells us of Stanislavski’s method in which the self is evoked in order to find the ‘other’. In

this context actors are compelled to make comparisons between themselves and the character they are meant to evoke. This comparison also includes evaluating the cultural context of the actor in relation to that of the character. My main actor from time to time referred to her home in order to explain to me how she understood what was going on in the character's life. This idea of social comparison seems to occur naturally in human beings. The question is: should such comparisons be relied on as a basis for the actor's choices?

7.6. Stanislavsky's Method – the Actors' Emotions' Discrepancy with Character's Emotions

Doctor Konijn's (2000) research from a book called *Acting Emotions* reveals that Stanislavskian belief in actors identifying with the character is not always the case. In one of her experiments she wired some actors to a device that monitored their heartbeats during a performance. Some actor's heart rates were far removed from the normal heart rate the character would feel in that particular moment in the story.

To this end, Konijn concluded something other than the actor identifying with the character was happening. In such moments an actor would be experiencing emotions connected with their personal unconscious memory having nothing to do with what the character is going through.

This seems to clarify moments in which my actor was overcome by deep sense of emotions and helplessness in moments of clear joy and contentment in my story. There were many moments of discrepancy between what she was feeling and what the character was supposed to be feeling, or with my emotional memories of the events. This phenomenon revealed the need to deepen the conversation with the actors about exactly where they were in each moment.

This became even more relevant as the emotions of my actors when portraying my story were meant to give me insight into what I went through during the time of the story. Did this mean the actors had to recreate the moments in the story exactly as they were originally conceived from the writers' experiences? Could this phenomenon of actors experiencing emotions which seemed different and sometimes completely the opposite of what I had felt during the actual events of the story, make me see the events in a different light?

7.7. The Actors' Internal Impulses versus the Inner Impulses

Tomas Richard (1995) writes in his book, *At Work with Jerzy Grotowski on Physical Actions* about the differences between Grotowski and Stanislavski in the way they viewed impulses. He indicates the major difference is Grotowski understood the impulses as rooted inside the body while Stanislavski (cited in Richards, 2004:96) believed they are rooted in the periphery of the body. "When we in-tend to do something, there is a right tension inside, directed outside," says Grotowski..

Rather than trying to map the emotional journey of the characters, ensuring the actors understood the intentions of the characters they portrayed was of paramount importance. They also had to understand the story itself was not some sacred account cast in stone. It represented what they found in their own cultural context. So they had to rely more on the impulses arising from the characters' intentions in each moment.

7.8. The archetypal nature of story

In his book, *Story – The substance and Principles of Storytelling*, Robert McKee (1997) says: "The archetypal story unearths a universally human experience then wraps itself inside a unique, culture-specific expression." Even though he speaks of a culture-specific expression, McKee claims an archetypal story provides a universally human experience.

Hence, I used the story archetypes of the Hero (my character in the story), the Mentor (songs of the struggles that fortified my courage), the Devil Figure (the terrifying dream, the terrifying songs of the red headbands hostel, the forces who raided the townships, and the Apartheid government's evil forces) and the Damsel in Distress (my family who were living deep in the throes of the lion's den).

7.9. Songs and their multidimensional nature (as text, as story, as a therapeutic tool)

One question continually confronting me is the relevance of the struggle songs in our time, especially since the dawn of democracy in South Africa. "As we celebrate 20 years of South Africa's democracy, freedom songs matter as much as they ever did... Not only do freedom songs constitute legacies from the past, they indicate present dynamics and offer directives toward the future" (Jolaosho 2014: 2).

Jolaosho (2014) examines the emotional impact South African struggle songs had upon the people who performed them as well as those who continue to perform these songs. It is a grounding study for this research as Jolaosho's examination was done with "...artist-activists drawing on their range of experiences to elucidate the origins, functions, and shifting dynamics of freedom songs in struggles to end apartheid." (Jolaosho 2014: 2)

The study was done through a process involving two main stages – a performing stage and a reflection stage. Artists performed for an audience and then a discussion among the performers was conducted by a facilitator in front of a public audience. What the article describes as the core and source of South African struggle songs is enlightening.

“The music of South Africa’s struggle emerged from communal practices in which music accompanied everyday activities, from rising in the morning to work routines to settling in at night” (Jolaosho 2014: 2). Tracing such origins and viewing this music’s communal and cultural context provides a frame for using it in a therapeutic process whose aim is to interrogate my past within a context of collective cultural memory. This context served as an aid for both me as a director and my actors, and later for the audience.

We may argue some memories or the cultural context contained in the songs of the struggle carry the gloomy past that divided a nation. Cecyl Esau, leader of the IJR’s oral history project writes in the Reconciliation Barometer, an online blog dedicated to reconciliation and nation building.

“Struggle songs like Dubulu iBhunu (sic) cannot be erased from our collective memory, and merit preservation for their role in mobilising against injustice and discrimination.” (Esau, 2011)

8. METHODOLOGY

8.1. The Arts-based Research Method and the Researcher’s Stance

David Aldridge’s chapter in Liamputtong & Rumbold (2008) explores and explains the research stance of qualitative art-based research. Through case examples the chapter encourages “the researcher to find her own understandings but also to question those understandings,” (Aldridge, 2008:205). As a theatre-maker I have my own understanding of how theatre works, which could cloud my judgment of the process.

Aldridge’s method shows how to question one’s knowledge in order to keep the research on an objective track. Central to Aldridge’s chapter are three levels of interpretation allowing interpretation of the process to be suitable and effective for each phase. These three planes

are explained by Lea, et al (2011) as: “the process (*praxis*) through which practitioners draw upon their Artist, Researcher, and Teacher identities to artistically engage (*poesis*) in research and (re)questioning their understandings (*theoria*),” (Lea, et al, 2001: 3). Hence, though I have experience in theatre-making, the process is rooted in relying on knowledge of the here and now in relation to theory in the field of Drama Therapy.

The importance of being objective or of questioning one’s understanding of a journey using storytelling as a form of enquiry is supported by Robert McKee (1997). McKee asserts stories have the power to tap into a society’s psyche. He writes in his book, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting*: “The finest writing not only reveals true character, but changes that inner nature, for better or worse, over the course of the telling.” (McKee, 1997).

My quest was to reveal my true character in order to change my inner nature for the better. Hence, I chose using my autobiographical story and committed it to writing. Instead of trying to recall all the events in my life in their entirety, the script provided the frame, a zooming in at a single major event.

9. THE METHOD

A fitting metaphor for the research method I have used are the popular time travel plots in which the hero is sent to the past to change a moment in history to change the state of affairs in the present. Another reason to time travel is to gain knowledge of the past to solve a problem in the present.

In this journey to the past I employed a heuristic enquiry linked with the theatre-making process as a form of enquiry. Djuraskovic and Arthur (2010:1572) say:

“Heuristic inquiry attempts to discover the nature and meaning of phenomenon through internal pathways of self-using the processes of self-reflection, exploration, and elucidation of the nature of phenomenon that is being studied,” (Djuraskovic and Arthur, 2010:1572).

An Arts based research methodology is one of the most suitable forms of heuristic research. Lea, et al (2011:3) says “it is a fluid orientation creating its rigor through continuous reflexivity and analysis”. Creating theatre is governed by continuous reflexivity. Accordingly, the rehearsal process offered me an opportunity to interrogate my past.

Art-making provided a better space to achieve the three elements of self-reflection, exploration, and elucidation. This is “the process (*praxis*) through which practitioners draw upon their Artist, Researcher, and Teacher identities to artistically engage (*poesis*) in research and (re)questioning their understanding (*theoria*),”

10. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF METHOD

While performing in the play, I realised how emotionally taxing this exploration truly was. I also acknowledged I was reliving the trauma. Consequently, I cast other actors in the play, including the lead role. Rather than see myself as the hero stepping into the dark, I enrolled myself as the mentor who travels with the hero.

The idea was to project part of me into the role – the character portrayed by the actor – and to permit the actor to create her own experience. The actor was allowed to interpret the character and its action. Heddon (2005) clearly states: “literal performances of the self are performances. That is, they are representational and as representations, they should not be taken to be in any way [as] real,” (2005:2).

Through the actors' emotional responses to the events, actions and moments, I was able to observe the subconscious events and moments in my story. From the very beginning, it was established the actors would speak to me as both the director and as the person whose story they were portraying. They were also to use their own interpretations and their own experiences to make choices.

From the choices they made; from the questions and remarks they made; I was able to gain insight into the instances portrayed. Whenever they made choices seeming to be too far removed from the actual moment they were portraying, I had to be completely neutral. So, instead of questioning or disagreeing with them about the choices they had made, I asked them explain their reasons for the choice. In this way, I was able to acquire a different perspective of those moments in the story.

There were lines in the script the actors felt were farfetched and did not make sense. In such occurrences, the idea was not to impose what the text carried or to disregard what it contained. I and the actors relied on what Artaud (1964:88) called the use of magic. He says:

It is in this light of magic use and witchcraft that one must consider the arts of staging, not as a reflection of a written text and of all that projection of physical doubles which are given off by the text, but as the burning projection of everything of objective consequence which can be derived from gesture, word, sound, music and from combinations thereof (cited in Jennings, 1994:104)

It should be noted Artaud acknowledges there are physical doubles projected by the text, while also acknowledging this projection should not supersede "everything objective". The objectives in this process were determined by what I – the director, the person whose story is portrayed as well as the actors – experienced in the here-and-now.

This capacity of theatre to allow a man to observe himself is the main reason why I chose the theatre making method for this research. Having been exposed to Boal's work I have come to appreciate the power of theatre as a means to interrogate our human nature and as a means to stimulate change. Augusto Boal (1995:3), a pioneer of Applied Theatre asserts, "Theatre – or theatricality – is this capacity, this human property which allows man to observe himself in action, in activity. The self-knowledge thus acquired allows him to... study alternatives" (Boal, 1995: 3).

11. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

11.1. Finding the Theme

Jones (2007) describes Therapeutic Theatre as having the following stages:

- finding or identifying the theme,
- reflecting on the theme,
- using the theme to design the scenario,
- scenario realisation and
- reflection. (Jones, 2007:36)

I followed this order closely. Since there were many ideas connected with my creation process. Therefore, I had to narrow the ideas into one common theme or into one controlling idea. To find the theme, I used the songs of the struggle.

For a period of about two months, I woke up early in the morning and sang the songs of the struggle. After singing a couple of these songs, one would resonate with more. I would then sing that song for as long as I felt like singing. Most the songs of the struggle are repetitive and there were times when I felt as if I went into a trance.

Immediately after singing, I would engage in free association writing. The idea was to write whatever came into my mind without stopping. The goal for each free writing session was

to fill at least one full page, even if it meant repeating ideas. Then I read the text and underlined words or phrases that captured my attention.

Although the text from free writing seemed to provide tangible narrative ideas to work with, I felt my ideas were still scattered. Slobin (2000) says: “One cannot verbalise experience without taking a perspective”. I wanted to narrow my play into one perspective without imposing a perspective.

I then employed the use of objects as a projective technique. Jones (2007) draws distinction between objects that exist as a specific form and those whose meaning is realised during the play. Objects existing as a specific form have a deliberate meaning, while objects whose meaning is realised during play, says Jones “add an additional factor of awareness, another level of possible meaning to the work” (2007:151). Hence, I decided to use the projective technique of using objects in a less specific form. Instead of using toys, which can be subject-specific, I borrowed from the African storytelling technique called Masekitla. This is the use of stones to aid in storytelling.

I also added logs along with the stones and scattered them on the floor to create a less specific world allowing for various interpretations. Instead of moving straight to free-writing after singing, I shuffled the logs and the stones to create a heap. I then looked at the heap and images would form in the stones. Whatever image emerged, I connected it to what it could mean in the context of the time and events I was exploring. The process proved what Jones (2007:151) says about how such objects work:

The cultural associations of clients concerning playing with objects will frame the experience. A common association is that object play is the domain of children; therefore associations for the client may be linked to this area – with their own childhood, or children with whom they have some current or previous connection (Jones, 2007:151)

Through this process, my childhood memories came flooding. For example, one of the images coming to the surface was that of a headless horse. This reminded me of the urban legend from the 1970s about a headless horse that roamed the streets at night looking for its head. The fear of walking at night because of the horse also brought the memories of the Apartheid government's state of emergency. At that time, we feared walking at night because the police would shoot at us. The logs and pebbles narrowed the focus of my free writing into solid images that triggered my memories.

One can argue unstructured free writing could have spontaneously revealed or tapped into what I would not have expected. While this is true, the logs and pebbles technique allowed me to project what was lying beneath my psyche. I found the recurring subject matter in the writing was that of home. During this time I also realised the song “Ekhaya Bakulindle”, meaning at home they are waiting for you, kept playing in my mind.

Images returned of the times when I was forced to leave home by the violence prior the democratic elections. I remembered how the song brought tears to most of us and frightening visions began to flash in front of me. From this theme ‘Home Is Where Pap en Vleis Is’, the title of the play was formulated. This image of “pap en vleis” – porridge and meat – is connected to *the* big moment in the events of the play. It serves as a metaphor for the warmth and love we had in our family home.

11.2. Creation of Characters

It became clear from the title song, “Ekhaya Bakulindle”, that the story is about someone who is urged to go home. The idea of a journey, the quest of a hero who has been gone from home for too long defined the central character. The songs strengthening the hero became the archetypal character of a mentor. Finally, the war chant which accompanied my haunting

dream became the monster the hero is obliged to slaughter. So, the main characters became the **Hero** on a quest to slay a monster holding his home hostage. The **Mentor** in the form of a song accompanies the hero. The **Monster** existing deep in the hero's psyche is a form of war chant the hero must silence to free his home.

11.3. The storyline

At this stage it was clear the story is connected with one evening when I missed home so much that I risked visiting there. This was despite knowing I was one of the comrades most wanted by Mzimhlophe Hostel and the Apartheid third forces. By my missing home so much, I risked to journey into that dark forest. I recalled the events of that evening and jotted them down. I then looked at the stages of the Hero's Journey (Pinkola 2004) to give these events and the storyline a dramatic structure:

- The Call to Adventure – The song *Ekhaya Bakulindle* urges the hero to go home.
- Refusal of the Call – Knowing how dangerous it is to go, the hero does all he can to resist the song.
- Supernatural Aid – One of the hero's friends comes with ammunition for the gun the hero holds so dear.
- The Crossing of the First Threshold – Entering the dark area of Mzimhlophe Hostel
- The Belly of the Whale – The hero has reached the point of no return. It is too far to where he is going and also too far from where he came.
- The Road of Trials – Some places the hero played as a child brings nostalgia making the journey even more desperate. This is because these memories are

accompanied by the violence vetted by the Apartheid government towards our parents.

- The Meeting with the Goddess – Memories of the protective nature of the hero's mother and the idea of seeing her after such a long time strengthens the hero to move forward.
- Woman as the Temptress – The bright memories of the hero's childhood sweetheart makes him question his resolve to risk it all by going to a dangerous place.
- Atonement with the Father – The hero is reminded of his elder brother's courage whenever he had to protect him (the hero). Therefore, he steps into the elder brother's shoes.
- Apotheosis – After learning the Red Bands marauders are in his home, the hero is transformed from being a man missing home into a soldier in a rescue mission.
- The Ultimate Boon – The hero comes back with a cake tin with porridge and meat, a symbol of his mother's love.

11.4. Identifying the Actors

I did not run open auditions in which a large number of people come to try for a role. Instead, I identified a number of actors whom I had earlier seen perform in a play. I made them aware I was looking for an actor to play the lead in a production which was part of my research.

During this time I was approached by a female actor who asked me to give her feedback on a One-Hander she was developing. As I was watching her perform her play the idea of using her came to mind. Her acting seemed stirred my consciousness, reminding me what Mitter (1992:11) alluded to about Stanislavski's idea of thinking about the inner side of the role.

Mitter says, “An actor is under the obligation to live his part inwardly, and then to give his experience an external embodiment.” This is what she seemed to project. Although at the time, I associated this quality with vulnerability.

I thought the vulnerability she displayed when dealing with the moments in the play would allow me to work through my own powerlessness. I gave her the script and a week later she was ready to audition. Since she knew she was to portray a male character, she tried portraying a macho character. However, that inner softness was still there. Hence, I encouraged her not to try to play it as a male character. All she had to do was play the essence and the objectives as honestly as she could.

As I had conceived the music as a character, I realised during rehearsals it needed to be presented physically. Later, I went to a community hall where they provided music lessons. There, I auditioned one of the young guitar tutors. Listening to him play gave me the idea of re-imagining the songs by adding a Jazz feel to them. So, Lesedi Nkgwe with his guitar was cast.

12. COLLECTION OF DATA

The initial idea was to use video and audio recording of the entire process as the primary method. Data collection and the use of journals were to be the secondary method. Finally, interviews and discussions with the actors was the tertiary means. Unfortunately, the presence of the camera seemed to put the actors into “acting” mode as they were aware this process was being recorded.

I too was affected by this as I could not let go of knowing what I was doing and saying was recorded. This made it difficult for all of us to live in the moment. I therefore decided to drop the video recording. Instead, I tried the idea of reflecting in action. During rehearsal,

the actors would share their thoughts and feelings with me and we had moments of reflection during most rehearsals.

At the end of most rehearsals, we had a discussion about what the actors felt or noticed during our run through. They would also ask questions about the story and the events dealt with in the script. Some of the reflection sessions were like interviews in which the actors asked me questions about my past.

By responding to their questions, I got to tell my story. These storytelling moments were quite revealing. I would remember stories and people I had long forgotten. At the end of rehearsals, I remained behind and use about half an hour to journal. In the journal I recorded what happened as well as the feelings raised in me during the rehearsal.

Yalom (2002:87) says, “Your most valuable source of data is your own feelings.” Here, Yalom was referring to the feelings a therapist would have towards a client in a particular moment. These feelings would serve as a clue as to what the client is going through internally at that particular moment.

In my case, when a certain moment in the play was explored, my feelings were not just a clue to what my actor was feeling and portraying. They were more about what the moment could have meant for me personally. Thus, feelings became a clue to what lies beneath that particular moment on an emotional or subconscious level. Hence in my journal I also recorded my feelings.

These feelings did not necessarily make sense at the outset. When strong feelings erupted – whether in me or in them – I always asked the actors what they were feeling. With these discussions, I was able to better understand the events of my story.

For instance, there is a moment in the play when the hero is hiding behind an electric power house not far from his home. He knew the Red Band forces were in the house with his family. The actor looked so scared and vulnerable as she portrayed the part.

I felt irritated by this weak portrayal of my character. I felt rage inside me. I found myself scolding the actor for not being insightful; to be aware this was not a moment of weakness. Then, I realised a part of me could be responding to how helpless I was in the moment depicted in the play. I recorded such moments in my journal verbatim and also elaborated on my feelings.

13. READING OF DATA

13.1. Through the Theoretical Lens

The reading of data in this research is informed by the same pretext informing the research process. This transpired on three planes – the process, the art making, and Drama Therapy theory. Jones (2007) also agrees with this continuum of moving from theatre. This entails the process of observing and recording what happens in the space (praxis); using poetics, and aesthetics as a yardstick to create and to question the work (poesies); to using theory to make sense of what happened (theoria). Jones (2007) maintains “The tools are derived from theatre; the goals are rooted in psychotherapy.”

The praxis level of my data concerned itself with looking at what was happening through the eye of an ordinary human without relating the action to art or psychology theories. – That is, I looked at the phenomena as it was experienced by both me and my actors in the moment without attempting to interpret.

The poesies level refers to speaking to the activity in relation to aesthetics and the poetics of the art form. For instance, I noticed the main actor was prone to act emotions. This attempt

of overly internalising resulted in what Boal calls a lack of counter-will, an external drive that connects with the actor's inner drive to produce believable action. Boal explains, “without counter-will, the actor will stay the same: static, un-theatrical”. Referring to art theory not only assisted with directing the actors, it also helped me to understand what was happening.

13.2. Making the Past Present

What writing the play and having it performed, for me, achieved one of the most fundamental core processes of Drama Therapy. - That is, to take the moment I could not deal with and bring it into the present. Pendzik (1988) says drama is, in fact, about “making something present”. Grotowski (Cited in Romanska 2012:150) says: “the author’s text is a sort of scalpel enabling us to open ourselves, to transcend ourselves, to find what is hidden within us and to make the act of encountering the others”.

Though it had been years since the events of the story happened there were moments in which the actors’ emotions became so real that it felt like I was right back in the time being depicted. I was outside of my body, looking at myself. Unlike in the dream, where I would be terrified to the point of losing control, now I could, tolerate what was going on even though I still felt the emotions inside. Pendzik further explains:

By becoming the protagonist of the patient’s disease, the shaman makes the illness explicit, thus providing the person with emotional tools to help tolerate it... Thus, the shamanic technique is based on the transference of the illness onto a specialist who, using his or her power and dramatic tools, is able to mirror it back to the individual. (Pendzik, 1982:82)

13.3. Director / Actor as a Shaman

This shamanic exchange became a two-way stream. There were moments when I would experience a flow of creativity. There were moments when I truly felt what I was doing as the director helped my actors make decisions. This came from a place beyond the normal conscious state. Some flowing ideas came as revelations. It was as if the spirit or the wounds of the character carried by the actor were transferred onto me and I reflected them back to the actor.

Pendzik (1988) says Shamans and actors “Both allow themselves to be “possessed” by either spirits or characters”. I had always thought the idea was to allow the actors to be possessed by the characters so they could live in them. I thought being “possessed” allowed them to make decisions based on what they knew and felt about the character.

Although Drama Therapy is compared by many Drama Therapists to Shamanism this is not actually the case. What I have learned in these moments is, unlike the shaman, the therapist, the director, the actor, or the client should not be in an altered state of consciousness. Landy (1994:112) explains why:

“A balance between the two extremes of over distance and under distance [has to be stricken]. At this point, the individual is able to think and to feel, and to find a comfortable balance of physical, emotional and intellectual distance,”
(Landy, 1994:112)

13.4. Shamanism as Analogy

To this end, I came to understand whenever Drama Therapists are referring to shamanism they are only using it in the context of an analogy. Unlike the shaman who enters an altered state to heal the client, Drama Therapists, while in the role, remain constantly conscious of what is happening in the process.

Consequently, a Therapeutic Theatre director should be constantly present for the actors. Actors, too, need to be present at all times. The actor enters into what Schechner (1985) calls the realm of “not me-not not me”. That is, the actor is not playing herself, but at the same time cannot say she is not herself. As Schmidt (1987, cited in Pendzik 1988) says, she “must learn how to sink without drowning”.

There were moments in which I found my actor drowning in the role; moments where she would be overcome by emotions. I noticed I would experience a tingling feeling inside of me, moments before she broke down. I relied on this feeling to help me understand what was going on inside of her. Whenever this happened I would gently stop her and ask her to reflect on what was happening and what she was feeling. This allowed her to breathe into the moment and she was then able to view the moment consciously.

By directing these moments and how I think they had to play out gave me more insight into what was going on. Having to tell the actor what I thought at that moment felt like I was talking to myself. In the same way the psychotherapist would reflect the event you have shared with them, I was given an opportunity to reflect back to myself what those moments really meant. This only became possible by my constantly being conscious of what was happening in the here and now. Unlike the shaman who transcends, my being present clarified the difference between how shamans and Drama Therapists work.

13.5. Art as a Mirror

Lindquist and Handelman (2005:108) argue the understanding of the self comes through learning and the reflection of the self in drama, or the “mirror. They assert: “Neither mutual mirroring, life by art, art by life, is exact, for each is not a planar mirror but a matrical

mirror; at each exchange something new is added, something old is lost or discarded.”
(Lindquist and Handelman, 2005:108)

Having revisited those moments in my mind and in my dreams for years, never had I had the perspective I reached when I was visualising these moments so I could help the actors portray them. The actors had their own way of seeing the events and the moments. Their views made me perceive those moments in a completely different light. Both the drama and the actors became a mirror through which I saw my issues differently.

13.6 The Hero’s Journey as a Vehicle for Change

Christopher Vogler sees change as an essential part of the hero’s journey: “CHANGE — Heroes don’t just visit death and come home. They return changed, transformed. No one can go through an experience at the edge of death without being changed in some way.”
(Vogler, 1988:160).

As a writer I have always believed in the story paradigm in which the main character undergoes a transformation. In search of this change I was able to see the significance of that event. I was able to see how I was changed by that moment. One thing I noticed was how the near death experience made me fear death and this fear of death permeated my approach to many things, creating other fears.

The main character comes to the story with preexisting “baggage” in the form of justifications (inner walls) that blind the character to his personal problem. Whether you call the baggage, the character’s problem (Dramatica), wound (Hauge), inner problem (Vogler), unconscious desire (McKee), Circle of Being (Field), motivation (Seager), or Need (Truby), the main character comes to the story “fully loaded” and ripe for change.

Each act describes the tearing down of the justifications hiding the main character's personal problem from his direct awareness. Once the character has grown enough to see beyond the justifications and recognises the true nature of his personal problems, can he then fundamentally alter his worldview and ultimately change.

13.7. Story as a Frame

Modern psychologists such as McAdams (2001) have determined stories or narratives provide a useful frame to convey coherence and meaning of a person's life. Events of violence have haunted me for years and have been haphazardly stored in my memory. This made it difficult for me to gain mastery of those memories. Hence, I was terrified by the events and the dreams generated by them. Committing the events into a coherent script made me see that world clearer.

McAdams (2001) says life stories are psychosocial constructs authored by the person himself as well as the cultural context within which that person's life is embedded. He adds it is this co-authorship context that gives meaning to the story.

During rehearsal I found the actors knew the story very well and they used their cultural context to understand it. Moreover, the choices and staging decisions we took were not dictated by me as writer and director, nor was it dictated by the actors. From the social, cultural and political context in which the story is set, and from the play context established during the rehearsals, we were able to make choices.

The final presentation as it was performed became a coauthored product. In the performance my understanding of the play altered form as I realised it was coauthored by the actors, the audience and me.

13.8. Identity vs. Self

In the life-story model, McAdams draws distinction between self and identity. He says a person's self-understanding is integrated synchronically and diachronically. That is, the integration of what a person is in different settings, and the integration of what a person used to be and what he is now.

He says it is in this integration the self is arranged and configured such that it situates a person into a meaningful psychosocial state, and this forms a person's identity. From this identity, asserts McAdams (2001:118), we are challenged to form a personal myth consisting of different kinds of characters.

This idea of drama as a frame through which one can formulate an integrated identity is supported by Landy (1986). "Clients...have created a dysfunctional image of themselves in the world. In drama therapy, they re-create that image so that it can be reviewed, recognised, and integrated, allowing a more functional self to emerge." (Cited in Jennings 1994:22). Through the experience of writing my life story, I was able to re-create my image of myself. I noticed I had always carried anger in me, accompanied by the morbid fear of bloodshed. The bouts of anger arising in me during rehearsals, the moments where my actor was overcome by fear or emotions, gave me an opportunity to process the events of the past. Being present and dealing with those events and having authority to decide how they played out in the drama built my courage.

14. STAGING AND AUDIENCE RESPONSE

Jones (2007:101) says, "In the first phase, the actors and director act as an audience to their own work, the future audience being present as an anticipation." Having to create the play with the audience in mind allowed me to see into my story with a very objective eye. My quest for the play made sense to my audience and it brought me to a new understanding of

what lies behind my story. Never before had I zoomed into the details and what they meant as I did as director of the play.

What I was not prepared for was the performance of *Home Is Where Pap en Vleis Is*. During the turbulent days of 2015's Fees Must Fall Campaign, a student mass action in which undergraduates were subject to harsh conditions resembling those of the Apartheid Era. The emotions evoked by the songs in the play affected some students in the audience. Their response was unprecedented.

In the first performance a mother and a daughter spoke about how the mother never thought how she feels about the father's absence. All along the mother had had believed the daughter was coping. The play allowed a dialogue to happen between the mother and her daughter. Some spoke about how their father was targeted by Apartheid forces and how he had to go away.

Some people cried in the theatre, and on this occasion, their tears were deep and solemn. I came to understand what Emunah says about non-fiction theatre:

When there is no fiction, the emotional catharsis that the theatre has always sanctioned is intensified. In the darkened, communal, sacred theatrical space, the audience can cry together for the pain of the people on stage, for their own pain, for the human condition (Emunah, 1994:293).

One audience member could not hold back the tears as the song took her back to the Fees Must Fall uprising. She was so moved that I had to acknowledge the pain she was going through. My idea was to adapt the songs into Jazz without losing the basic memory and rhythm.

The undertone of the audience during the performance enhanced those moments. They acknowledged the pain and applauded the moments of victory. It made me realise I was not

alone. There were other people who understood what my character was going through. Yalom (2002) says the most important part of therapy is to listen to the client. Having the audience pay their undivided attention to my story was empowering. They made the story have deeper meaning even for me. The reverence they gave to my narrative made me realise the story was even more important than I had previously thought.

14.1 LIMITATIONS

My supervisor kept drawing my attention back to the background. She constantly told me “the landscape has to breathe”. This helped me to focus on the entire social, psychological and political context in which the story happened.

This allowed me to view the story as an outsider. It allowed me to have a bird’s eye view of the story and it allowed the landscape to breathe. Consequently, this permitted the audience to consider the story their own and through their view, I developed a broader vision of my story.

15. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The goals of this research were mainly about ascertaining how Therapeutic Theatre works as a vehicle for healing. These goals were closely connected to the therapeutic core processes of Drama Therapy as set out by Jones (2007). According to Jones, “These elements, or core processes, describe the ways in which drama and theatre forms and processes can be therapeutic.” Hence, I have used them as a yardstick facilitating discussion of the findings of this research. Those goals were:

- To explore how Therapeutic Theatre works from the creator and director’s perspective
- To experience how writing and making theatre is therapeutic

- To gain mastery of past events so I could develop a new and different perspective
- To gain healing and transformation through lying to rest the ghosts of the past.

Having read about and having participated in Drama Therapy processes linked to Therapeutic Theatre, I have never had a better grasp of Therapeutic Theatre. After spending months working as writer, actor and, ultimately, director, I gained special insight – an epiphany.

I am now convinced Therapeutic Theatre is a modality I will apply in my practice as a Drama Therapist. As an artist who has always created theatre, I feel my journey through this project has also added to my knowledge of what lies beneath Theatre-making. Jones (2007: 263) has stated: “At times the client becomes a witness to the symbolic world she has created. She becomes a viewer of her internal world, its split sides, and through developing a reflective relationship with it, gains insight,” (Jones, 2007: 263).

16. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I should have used more improvisation. I should have allowed the actors to reinvent certain moments. This could have helped bring other aspects forward into my awareness. (Pendzik 1988:85) asserts: “drama therapists are not limited to performance of the situation exactly “as it is,” but are able to interject their own insights, so as to help the client bring other aspects into awareness” (Pendzik, 1988:85)

According to Meldrum, the aesthetic distance offered by exploring material other than that of the client “allows him or her to travel rapidly between objective and subjective reality...” (Meldrum, 1994:23). My moving from objective and subjective was not as rapid as it would have been had the story been fictional. I took the role of a director who was flexible

to the reinterpretation of the story so I could gain a broader perspective of what lay beneath those events and times. However, I could not be objective. For this, my recommendation would be to take the process to the next stage. That is, where the text, the story, the events and the characters are allowed to evolve. This would have had me moving from what is termed a true story to what is referred to as a story based on the true story. This stage could allow the client to break free of confining elements of those traumatic events.

Some audience reactions went far beyond what I had expected. This was especially so since the performance coincided with the Fees Must Fall Campaign of 2015. This was the time of the national protest action in which South African university students fought for free education. Some of the songs the students used in their protests were modernised versions of the songs I used in the play.

While the play dealt with the ghosts of my past, to many students in the audience the songs exposed pain that was current. The need to thoroughly prepare the audience is attested to by Thulo (2009). Thulo, a theatre maker who is also a qualified sangoma – a South African shaman – alludes to Schechner's concept of the "second reality"; a state where people are transformed through ritual into selves other than their daily identities.

To prepare the audience for his play that explored his personal experiences, Thulo invited the audience to engage in the ritual of washing hands as they entered the theatre. Thus, this ritual deepened the meaning of the performance. With my play, though the audience was made aware of the nature of the performance, I feel they could have engaged with the process more had I employed the ritual for them.

Sally Moore and Barbara Myerhoff (1979) say "collective ritual can be seen as an especially dramatic attempt to bring some particular part of life firmly and definitively into orderly control. It belongs to the structuring side of the cultural historical process." (Cited in Turner,

1987:28) Engaging the audience would not only frame the performance, it would have also created the sense of community among the audience.

17. CONCLUSION

“Heuristic inquiry does not exclude the researcher from the study; rather, it incorporates the researcher’s experiences with the experiences of co-researchers” (Djuraskovic, I., & Arthur, N., 2011:1572. Working on this research was like taking a journey into a dark forest. Did taking the role of the director prove therapeutic? I had three weeks of rehearsal. Five days a week, we spent about five hours in the rehearsal. What those hours offered can be summed up by Casson who explains how the protagonist (the person whose story is performed) can benefit from witnessing the double (the person who is portraying the protagonist):

A double is an auxiliary who helps a protagonist express feelings by speaking as if they were that person. The protagonist can then own these feelings or correct the double. For people who cannot feel, or express their feelings, or who have not had a sufficiently empathic advocate or witness in their life, the double is especially helpful (Casson, 2004:204).

The actor who played my character was capable of what I believe I had always lacked – the ability to express my feelings through tears. Many times she broke down in tears. Even though I did not literally cry along, her tears moved something inside me. It is in such moments my question about whether taking the role of director in my own story would help me face my demons was answered.

The events of the story always had power over me because I could not control or touch them. Being a director and being the one who had a final say in how the events had to play out in the drama strengthened me. I was able to move from viewing myself as a victim of those past events. Now, I had an opportunity to be the god of my story.

Part of the evidence I was transformed by the play is that when I recall the events of the story now, those vivid images are no longer frightening moments. They have been replaced by images of creating the play and how the audience was moved by my story. For instance, there is a moment in the story where I was hiding behind a powerhouse opposite our house. I knew the hostel indunas wanted me and anyone close to me dead and they are in the house where my parents and siblings were (see addendum A: script).

The picture of the actor with the imaginary gun in her hand advancing towards the house ignited the hero in me. This was unlike my memory of that event, which was filled with dread and the image of my being stuck powerlessly behind that powerhouse. Now, I can also see myself advancing heroically towards the house to rescue my family.

It may seem as though I mean my memories were replaced but that isn't the case. I can still travel back in time in my mind. However, the emotional response to those events is similar to what we explored in the play. There is a sense of being in control. Moreover, having someone paying undivided attention to my story gave me an opportunity to have a conversation with myself. To this end, I find it easier now to speak about the past with other people.

The process also helped to concretise the invisible demon that came to my dream in the form of a war chant by the people who were attacking me. Using actors to portray the songs as characters, by embodying the actions of the lyrics rather than just singing them, solidified the songs. When I taught the actors the songs, singing the war chant that had tormented me for years, I felt strengthened. I felt I would no longer be afraid of the song. Not only were

the songs concretised, the dream which came with them was also made tangible. Casson explains the phenomenon:

In the psychodrama abstract, emotional or imaginary elements can be dramatically symbolised by concrete objects or people. People who are already 'concrete' in their thinking can benefit from active ways of symbolising and expressing things (Casson, 2004:206).

Those songs had always been a horrifying sound in my head. Singing them to teach the cast made the song reverberate in my body until I sang them with pleasure.

Did the process bring total healing? If such a performance is regarded by Schechner as being a ritual it would be unrealistic to expect a ceremony to bring about magical and sudden change. Having tackled the traumatic event in the past and spending long hours in the rehearsal space has made a difference.

The insight I have gained as both a theatre director and as someone who is training to become a Drama Therapist has been tremendous. I have descended into the dark forest. I feel that, as I continue with my training and applying the knowledge I received. I am now in the process of ascending back to my world.

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The play

The song Ekhaya Bakulindile is playing in the background. Com-Tsotsi is pacing up and down nervous.

COM-TSOTSI

Home is where pap and vleis is.
This place has become the holder of
sweet memories. It is also a place
that comes with a constant dream
that has kept my pillow wet with
bitter sweat almost every night of
my life. This dream has become a
high rocky mountain I have to climb
each time I want to journey back to
the days of my growing up.

He begins to walk steadily

COM-TSOTSI

I am walking in the dark. I have to
avoid the light. Here there are
eyes that should not at all feast
at my gait, nor glance at my face.
Out of tens of thousands of eyes in
this place only four pairs of eyes
are a window to the souls I trust.
Every other soul living here can
gladly sell my soul for less than
thirty pieces of raw chicken.
Relish and good home cooked meal is
a luxury in this place. This place
called Beirut is a section of
Mzimhlophe Hostel into which
families that were affected by the
Kliptown floods of 1976 were moved.
Few know about these floods because
their story was overshadowed by the
Black Power of 1976.

He looks from left to right and behind his shoulder.

COM-TSOTSI

As I walk I feel that there are
million eyes looking at me. Except
with a bullet from my tiny Nine
Milimeter Automatic Pistol I do not
wish to meet the souls to which
these eyes lead. My parents and my
two younger sisters are the only
souls who own eyes that I am
longing to see. It is the souls
that glance through these eyes I am
longing to see. Otherwise why would
I, one of the most wanted Comrades
in this IFP stronghold, step into
the wolves' den?

The song "Opopeye, baphuma oLundi, bapheth' izibhamu. Bangen' emalokshini; badubul' abafowethu" [Popeyes are from Lundi. They are carrying guns. They enter the townships and shoot our brothers.]

COM-TSOTSI

This evening the journey home is
either too long or my feet have
completely forgotten what tune to
harm when they take me home. I have
not been home for more than a year.
The dust and the gun smoke have
settled in the air. Part of me
knows that the smoke from a burnt
human flesh and the smell of blood
have not settled in all the hearts
of all the souls living in this
place.

The song stops. He paces faster

I pass Big Street. This is the street in which I drove my car made of wires with my friends. I played top and marbles. I played Dibeke with boys I shared dreams with and with girls I secretly admired. This street carries the laughter and the shouts of all the games I played as a child. Now Big Street has become the Rubicon between the place of safety and the place of death. This place of death is my home. Now I am deep in the throes of Beirut. My heart is beating fast. I wish I could turn back, but I miss home. I miss my parents and my younger sisters. I am not going back. I am going home.

He stops and kneels staring forward.

There it is, the house that has sheltered me for two decades. It feels as if it's been a decade since I have last seen our house. My elder brother and I had to leave home because of the political violence of the late eighties, early nineties. My younger brother has joined the liberation army and he's not in the country. I am crossing the street and I am heading to the gate. Something doesn't feel right. I pause. I hear footsteps running towards me. I turn. It's a young man I know very well.

"Slams," he calls me by my nickname, "Induna and his people are inside your house. They are looking for you,"

Induna is a notorious leader of the people known for their raids in the townships of killing innocent people. These men were seen for several times being escorted by police Caspirs as they entered the township to cut a swathe of doom and destruction.

The song "Opopeye, baphuma oLundi, bapheth' izibhamu. Bangen' emalokshini; badubul' abafowethu" [Popeyes are from Lundi. They are carrying guns. They enter the townships and shoot our brothers.]

They are the most feared creatures
in the planet earth. Now they are
in my house where my loved ones
are. At this hour a demon or an
angel descends or ascends from
heaven or from hell. With a fiery
chisel it carves this image
somewhere inside me for it to
remain to time immemorial.

I waste no time. I dash into the
dark behind the powerhouse facing
our house.

He moves to the corner of the stage and kneels.

Why am I hiding? My folks need my
help. I have to go in. if I catch
them unawares I can defeat them. I
should have asked the young man how
many they are. This lousy Nine
Millimetre Automatic Pistol is a
joke. These people carry AK 47's.
Fuck, I am going in.

*He stands up and heads forward. He stops abruptly and
retreats.*

The door opens. Induna and his red
headband forces come out of the
house. I count them. They are
twelve. I have eight bullets. I
should have brought a bigger gun
with more ammunition, but I was not
going to war; I was coming home. I
can't tell how many of them are
carrying machine guns. These people
carry all sorts of assegais, spears
and under their huge coats they
have all kinds of killing machines
from their main sponsor, the
Apartheid government. I watch them
as they are disappearing into the
dark that leads to their den, the
men's section of Mzimhlophe Hostel.

I rush into the house. In my mind I see a picture of my parents and my younger sisters lying in the pool of blood with some of their body parts missing. This is what these people do after their slaughter. My eyes, like the eyes of many of us who had the duty to protect our communities, were used to be greeted with mutilated bodies of the unlucky township dwellers, but they are not ready to see my folks in that state. The carving demon-angel also carves this picture inside me, the picture of the mutilated bodies of my loved ones.

The song Nkosi Yami plays in the background.

I open the door. It's quiet in the house. I see my mother, my father and my younger sisters on the couch holding one another tight.

The song stops.

They see me and they jump up at the same time. They are trying to tell me to run. They don't know that I know that Induna and his people were here. I try to ask what Induna and his people said. They can't tell me. All I have to do is to run because the wolves said they were coming back.

I head towards the door not to run from the monsters that were here but to run from what I see in my people's eyes. The terror in them shakes the self-made soldier in me. The stories of all the deaths I have witnessed and heard of is inscribed in their eyes. For the first time this room in which I have known nothing but laughter and warmth is now filled with an eerie sound of my breath and the palpitating beats of my heart. Right in this room where I learned to love life and to love humankind I am learning to hate. Right at this moment I can feel the demon-angel chisel carving anger deep in my soul. My home is being stolen from me.

The song Asisalali Emakhaya is playing

I turn the door handle. Just before I pull the door open my mother says, "Wait." She takes out a scuff tin and she puts porridge and meat in it and gives it to me. I have never seen my mother like this before. She is really shaken; everything in her is shaken, except for the mother in her.

The song Asisalali Emakhaya stops and the song Mama MZali Sula Izinyembezi is playing.

I later ate that porridge and meat with Japan, my cousin, my comrade. As I am chewing the meal I am devastated by the thought that this is probably the last home cooked meal I will have.

The song stops.

This is the story that stands between me and my childhood memories, the story of my growing up. As Maya Angelou says, "I believe that one carries the shadows, the dreams, the fears and the dragons of home under one's skin." The word dreams in this quote is overshadowed by all these other words that carry the negative concept of home. Home is what you take with you, as Angelou says above. I have taken with me the dragons of that place where my home is. The dragons are hovering outside denying me the entry into the safe haven where that love that could think of porridge and meat in the hour of death lived.

Today that house is occupied by other people. Since that moment I have never gone back to that place. I want to go back just to take a last look at our home, the place where pap and vleis is.

The song Tambo Likude Ikhaya Lami is playing.